



For Immediate Release
February 12, 2008

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State of Nevada Releases a Fiscal Snapshot to Increase Citizen Involvement

*Easy-to-Read Reports Are First of Their Kind in National Initiative to Facilitate
Citizen Understanding and Participation in Debates on Fiscal Priorities*

CARSON CITY, NEV.—The State of Nevada released a four-page fiscal snapshot today, as part of a national initiative by the Association of Government Accountants (AGA) to bring clarity to fiscal reporting in municipal, county and state governments. Under the leadership of Nevada State Controller, Kim Wallin, Nevada is one of the first state governments in the nation to issue such reports in AGA's Citizen Centric project, which kicked off in the spring of 2007.

The initiative aims to bring more citizens into discussions over local fiscal priorities by making government financial documents short and easy to understand. Through this nationwide campaign, the AGA has encouraged municipal, county and state governments to publish straightforward reports about their fiscal condition that provide an honest and clear answer to the question "Are we better off today than we were last year?"

"Government fiscal assessments generally read like telephone books, with more pages of footnotes than the average citizen knows what to do with," said Relmond Van Daniker, AGA executive director. "The Citizen Centric project is about getting back to what accountants are meant to do – crunch the numbers and make them understandable for the people we serve."

The report measures performance in Fiscal Year 2007, complete with the past year's accomplishments as well as the challenges that lie ahead. It lays out in easy-to-read charts: breakdowns of revenues by source and expenditures by function. The full Nevada report is available at www.agacgfm.org/citizen/downloads/Nevada2007.pdf.

"Good governance requires good information. The Citizen Centric project allows us to engage Nevada residents on the question of fiscal priorities in a format short enough to encourage the discussion of these issues," said Kim Wallin, State Controller, State of Nevada. "For residents, this is the equivalent of taking a look at your state's check book – where the money came from and where it went. And that informs a better civic discussion."

The State of Nevada report highlights a number of successful projects in the past year, among them are the educational programs such as Reading First and Nevada Early Literacy Intervention that reduced the state drop-out rate to 4.6% - the lowest rate in over a century; the state graduation rate increased to 67.5% - ending a three-year trend of decreasing graduation rates and the state remained near the top in personal income growth nationwide. Like in many states, the mortgage crisis and health care are the biggest challenges that lie ahead.

"This initiative is about honestly reporting back to our citizens and saying, 'This is what's been done well, and this is where we're going to need to improve in the years to come,'" said Wallin. "This state learned long ago that you can't move forward without its citizens weighing in, and we hope this report is a big step in making that process easier."

Van Daniker concluded, "The State of Nevada reminded us today that bringing citizens into the discussion about priorities is what American government is all about. That's a lesson so many of our state governments can learn from."

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The Association of Government Accountants is a 15,000-member professional Association that serves government accountability professionals by providing quality education, fostering professional development and certification, and supporting standards and research to advance government accountability. For more information about the Association, call 800.AGA.7211, or visit AGA's website at www.agacgfm.org.